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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 001227

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STATE FOR AF, AF/E AND AF/EPS

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SUBJECT: DJIBOUTI AIRPORT MANAGER ON EXPANSION AND U.S.
MILITARY USE OF DJIBOUTI PORT FACILITIES

REF: DJIBOUTI 856 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA D. RAGSDALE. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (C) Summary: David Hawker, Dubai Ports International representative in Djibouti who manages Djibouti International Airport, confirmed to Ambassador the Government of Djibouti's interest in expanding the country's existing international airport at Ambouli. Nothing firm is on the table, but issues of space will loom large in accommodating a second runway and in revamping or rebuilding the existing terminal. Hawker sees U.S. use of the airport as incurring some additional cost for the airport. At least USD 1.2 million will be required to purchase new fire engines to meet ICAO regulations as a result of the airport's accommodation of the U.S. C-5 "Galaxy" aircraft, according to Hawker. On the new seaport under construction at Doraleh, Hawker said clarification is needed from the U.S. Navy about the type and size of vessels it wishes to moor at the new port. For now, Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC), under its subsidiary Horizon, is not interested in accommodating the Navy's largest vessels, due to structural capacity limits of the Phase One oil terminal jetty. Hawker also used the occasion of the Ambassador's call to again note that outstanding U.S. military aircraft parking fees ostensibly accrued to Camp Lemonier remain unsettled. End Summary.

The Future of the International Airport

2. (C) Ambassador asked Hawker where discussions were on the possibility of a new international airport, or expanded facility, for Djibouti. Hawker said the Government of Djibouti wants to expand the current airport, but different elements that would be involved in planning -- potential private investors such as Djiboutian national Abdurrahman Boreh, Defense which works with the U.S. and French military presence at the airport, the Foreign Ministry, and the Presidency --- are not coordinating with each other. If there were coordination, Hawker opined, the current space allotted to the U.S. and France for military use would not have been provided. To build a new airport from scratch is an entirely different matter, he said. "It's dreadfully expensive." Hawker continued that Dubai International has "great interest" in renovating or rebuilding the existing terminal at the airport and possibly constructing a second runway. There were discussions already about expanding the terminal by 10 meters or so, he said, but was nixed as too costly for the space gained. It would be better to build a new terminal building. That, with a second runway, would of course require more space than the airport currently has. The U.S. company Black and Veatch is looking at possibilities, but Hawker did not speculate on preliminary findings the company may have made.

U.S. Naval Intent at Doraleh

3. (C) In a discussion of progress, from site manager ENOC's perspective, in construction of the new Doraleh Phase One oil terminal facility, Hawker told Ambassador that it will be important to get clarification from the U.S. Navy about what would be the largest oil supply vessels it expected to bring into Doraleh to pick up and deliver fuel to its vessels offshore. Speaking frankly, he continued, he understood there was interest on the U.S. Embassy's side in possible carrier visits to port. Hawker said his company is not particularly interested in servicing large vessels at its Phase I oil terminal container facility. He explained that the jetty at the new terminal could support a maximum of 80,000 dwt. A tanker, for example, is mostly underwater, creating less "windage", than an aircraft carrier, which is mostly above water and has extensions. The jetty could not withstand the pressure of such a vessel unless piles were designed and manufactured differently. However, once Phase II of port construction begins, which will include a container terminal, Hawker said, it would not be so difficult for a large carrier to come to shore. However, he said he did not expect the container terminal to be operational until at least 2008.

The C-5 Increases Airport Expenses

14. (C) In a follow-on discussion of his office's interactions with Camp Lemonier, Hawker said the U.S. military's use of the airport's aircraft parking ramps necessitated some "precision" in guidelines as to what would trigger a parking charge to the U.S. military. He said he would raise this soon with the Camp as there was a difference of perspective, for example, on what constituted "overnight" parking for U.S. aircraft. It was important to collect these fees, Hawker continued, because of the added expense accruing to the airport of U.S. operation of C-5 aircraft in and out of Djibouti. Hawker explained that under present ICAO guidelines, Djibouti qualifies for "Category 7" firefighting equipment. Categories are defined in terms of the length and fuselage width of the aircraft operating out of the airport. These categories dictate the water capacity the engine is obliged to transport, among other requirements. The entry and exit of U.S. C-5s (what Hawker termed "Galaxy" aircraft), increases that requirement to "Category 9." Thus new engines are needed. He estimated the cost at USD 600,000 each for the two that Ambouli airport would require. Hawker did not explicitly state that he wanted the U.S. to help foot the bill for the new engines. However, he reiterated that the long-standing issue of sizable outstanding parking arrears attributed to Camp Lemonier has still not been resolved.

Comment

15. (C) Hawker, a UK national with links to the UAE and Djibouti, and with his vantage point grounded in the airport, is in a position to keep a firm finger on the commercial pulse of Djibouti. He is generally well-informed and has not been reluctant to share his insight with the Embassy. He continues to work the airport's specific issues of concern on the U.S. military side directly with Camp Lemonier, as Ambassador encourages. End comment.
RAGSDALE